

# Secret to super crispy, juicy Midwest fried chicken with authentic flavor?

[Midwest Foodie \(www.vchale.com\)](http://www.vchale.com)

## Unlocking the Magic of Midwest Fried Chicken

There's a reason Midwest fried chicken holds a legendary status in American culinary history. It's not just about a simple piece of fried poultry; it's an experience—a symphony of crunch, succulence, and deeply savory flavor that transports you straight to a grandma's kitchen on a Sunday afternoon. While many claim to have the secret, true authentic Midwest fried chicken hinges on a few crucial, time-honored techniques.



## The Buttermilk Baptism: Juiciness from Within

The journey to truly juicy fried chicken begins long before it hits the hot oil. The undisputed first secret lies in a proper buttermilk brine. Buttermilk, with its mild acidity, works wonders to tenderize the chicken meat without breaking it down, while its natural sugars and fats infuse moisture and a subtle tang. A minimum soak of 4-6 hours, or ideally overnight, allows the chicken to become incredibly tender and flavorful from the inside out.

Beyond buttermilk, a good brine often includes a generous amount of salt, black pepper, and perhaps a touch of hot sauce or garlic powder for an initial flavor boost. This isn't just about surface seasoning; it's about building a foundation of taste that permeates every fiber of the meat.



## The Double Dredge: The Secret to an Unforgettable Crunch

Once the chicken has been lovingly brined, the next critical step is the dredging process—and this is where the “super crispy” magic truly happens. A robust dredging flour mixture is essential. Think all-purpose flour, but don't shy away from adding cornstarch or baking powder for an extra crisp factor. The seasoning of this flour is paramount: a generous hand with salt, freshly ground black pepper, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, and a pinch of cayenne pepper will create that signature authentic Midwest flavor.

The real trick, however, is the “double dredge.” After draining excess buttermilk, coat each piece thoroughly in the seasoned flour. Then, dip it back into any remaining buttermilk (or a separate egg wash), and finally, give it a second, thorough coating in the flour mixture. This creates multiple layers of

crust, resulting in those irresistible crags and crannies that fry up into an exceptionally crunchy, shattery exterior.



## Mastering the Fry: Temperature and Technique

With perfectly prepped chicken, the frying itself becomes an art form. The choice of oil is important—peanut oil, vegetable oil, or shortening are classic choices known for their high smoke points and neutral flavor. The temperature control, however, is the ultimate game-changer. Most Midwest chefs advocate for starting at a slightly higher temperature (around 350-375°F / 175-190°C) to immediately set the crust, then reducing the heat to a moderate 300-325°F (150-160°C) for the remainder of the cooking time.

This graduated temperature ensures the chicken cooks through evenly without burning the crust, yielding that tender, juicy interior alongside the golden, crispy exterior. Don't overcrowd the pan, and allow each piece ample time to achieve a deep golden brown and reach an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C).



## **The Flavor Finish: More Than Just Salt**

While the buttermilk and seasoned dredge lay a strong flavor foundation, the authentic Midwest experience often comes with a final touch. A sprinkle of flaky sea salt immediately after draining the hot chicken adds another layer of texture and boosts the overall savoriness. Some traditionalists even have a secret sprinkle of their own, perhaps a dash of celery salt or a very light dusting of additional paprika for color and subtle warmth.

Serving this culinary masterpiece is half the fun. Pair it with classic Midwest sides like creamy mashed potatoes and gravy, collard greens, sweet corn on the cob, or a tangy potato salad for a meal that embodies true comfort and tradition. Each bite offers that satisfying crunch, followed by the burst of juicy, tender chicken—a testament to the timeless appeal of true Midwest fried chicken.



